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FM USDEL SECRETARY //BAHRAIN//  
TO RUEHKU/AMEMBASSY KUWAIT IMMEDIATE  
INFO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUCNIR/IRAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD PRIORITY  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 PARTO 051302

SIPDIS

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TAGS: OVIP RICE CONDOLEEZZA PGOV PREL PVTS  
PINR, KU, IZ  
SUBJECT: (U) SECRETARY RICE'S APRIL 22, 2008  
PARTICIPATION IN THE THIRD EXPANDED IRAQ NEIGHBORS  
CONFERENCE

¶1. (U) Classified by: Kevin Whitaker, Deputy  
Executive Secretary, S/ES, Department of State.  
Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶2. (U) April 22, 2008, Kuwait City, Kuwait

¶3. (U) Participants:

U.S.  
The Secretary  
A/S C. David Welch, NEA  
Ambassador David Satterfield, NEA/I  
Ambassador Ryan Crocker, U.S. Embassy Baghdad  
LTG William Fraser, JCS  
Matthias Mittman, NSC  
Matt Tueller, U.S. Embassy Baghdad  
Thomas Rosenberger (Embassy Notetaker)

Non-USG Meeting Participants:  
Kuwaiti Prime Minister Nasser Al-Mohammed Al-Ahmad Al  
Sabah  
Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki  
Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari  
UN Under-Secretary General Lynn Pascoe  
Canadian Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs  
Deepak Obhrai  
Egyptian Assistant Foreign Minister for Arab Affairs  
Ambassador Mohammed Bader Al-Deen  
Jordanian Foreign Minister Dr. Salah Al-Bashir  
Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki  
Syrian Foreign Minister Walid Al-Moalem  
Italian Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Ugo Inteni  
Russian Foreign Minister Sergey V. Lavrov  
Slovenian(EU Presidency) Foreign Minister Dr. Dimitrij  
Rupel  
OIC Secretary General Prof. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu

¶4. (C) SUMMARY. The Third Iraq Neighbors  
Ministerial, held in Kuwait on April 22, offered Iraqi  
PM Nouri Al-Maliki an opportunity to present to Iraq's  
neighbors and members of international bodies a  
picture of the progress in the country. He received a  
warm welcome and a show of support from the  
participants. There was a general consensus that  
notable progress had occurred in Iraq, but that the  
current situation remained fragile. Iran and Syria  
laid blame for ongoing problems on the presence of  
"foreign troops." The EU led calls for the exchange  
of diplomatic representations, and the OIC announced  
the establishment of a permanent office in Baghdad.  
END SUMMARY.

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Progress in Iraq  
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¶5. (C) Iraqi PM Nouri al-Maliki told the participants

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that Iraqis have moved beyond their violent past and  
are now unified. He presented an image of a new Iraq  
that wants to be at peace with its neighbors, in  
contrast to the war-mongering of the former regime,  
and lamented that Iraqis are still paying the price  
for the errors of the previous leadership. He chided  
the attendees for a lack of progress on commitments  
made at previous conferences, notably on debt  
forgiveness, and extolled other countries with "no  
mutual historical or cultural ties" who forgave Iraqi  
debt. He also called for an exchange of diplomatic  
representation.

¶6. (C) Kuwait MFA U/S Khaled Al-Jarallah described  
the conference as positive and transparent, saying it  
had succeeded in laying the groundwork for further  
progress. Most of the heads of delegations who spoke  
commented favorably on the achievements in Iraq.  
Several added the caveat that the gains were fragile  
and that the future remained uncertain. Typically,  
Arab heads of delegations conceded progress in Iraq  
but failed to recognize that real change had occurred,  
a point noted by the Secretary in her remarks.

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Outside Interference?  
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¶7. (C) The negative role of outside interference was  
another theme of the conference, including citations  
by some of the negative impact that armed militants  
had in Iraq. Iran and, to a lesser extent, Syria  
dismissed the GOI's continuing request for Coalition  
presence in Iraq and blamed Iraqi woes on "foreign  
forces" in Iraq. Iranian FM Manoucher Mottaki opined

that these forces "contribute to the continuation of security mayhem, stirring disputes and conflicts, and further complicate the political and security crises in Iraq." He also said that he opposed (as translated) "the unilateral policies of the Coalition powers" and their "conspiracies" against the people of the region. Syrian FM Walid Al-Moalem also called for foreign troops to leave Iraq and indicated that he held the USG "morally and legally responsible for the difficult human conditions of the displaced Iraqis."

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OIC Office in Baghdad  
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**18.** (C) Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) Secretary General Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu announced that the OIC office in Baghdad had officially opened three days prior to the ministerial. He said he hoped that, building on the 2006 Mecca Declaration Initiative, this permanent presence would enable the OIC to play a key role in reconciliation efforts between Sunni and

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Shi'a sects. He also announced OIC's plans to send a joint delegation composed of representatives of all OIC affiliates to Baghdad.

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Canada Speaks Out for Christian Minorities  
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**19.** (C) Canadian Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs Deepak Obhrai called for increased efforts to recognize and respect minorities in Iraq, lamenting the murder of Chaldean Archbishop Paulos Farraj Rahho and the shooting of Assyrian Orthodox Priest Adel Youssef.

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EU Calls for Diplomatic Representation  
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**10.** (C) Although there was little specific action on new diplomatic representation in Iraq, Slovenian FM Dimitrij Rupel (representing the EU Presidency) encouraged "those neighbors and other members of the international community who have not already done so to take advantage of the improved security situation and commit to sending ambassadors to Baghdad and opening diplomatic missions to facilitate direct bilateral diplomatic relations."

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Japan's New Loan  
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**11.** (C) Japan's Senior Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs Itsunori Onodera announced that Japan will extend a new loan of 350 million USD for water supply projects in the Kurdish region of Iraq and a sewage facilities project in Baghdad. These were in addition to the existing loans that amounted to 2.1 billion USD. In announcing this, he stated that "Japan is determined to continue its assistance to Iraq." His voice was prominent among those that called for an exchange of diplomatic representation and lauded PM Maliki's efforts in Basrah.

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Russia: "We've done the most for Iraq"

**12.** (C) Russian FM Sergey Lavrov urged caution in terms of a withdrawal of foreign troops, which he stressed "are considered by many Iraqis as occupants [sic]." He also stated that "of all the nations which have already restructured Iraqi debt, Russia has done more for the Iraqi people than any other country in terms of the value and percentage of debt relief."  
RICE